# *Henry B. González*
## *1916–2000*

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE 1961–1999
DEMOCRAT FROM TEXAS

Henry González served 37 years in the House, making him the longest-serving Hispanic Member in Congress. A pioneering, populist figure in Texas state politics, he was revered by his hometown constituents, who knew him as "Henry B." González rejected radical reformers, pursuing a strategy of effecting change from within the system. His pugnacious style and undeterred commitment to causes and programs he held dear often left him marginalized by those in power at the national level. "Given that the power to influence decisions that affect our lives is concentrated in the established systems of our government, I felt that I could contribute by participating in that process," González wrote. "There is a place for those who remain outside these processes, but I felt that I could contribute by influencing policy from the inside. Yet even on the inside I have largely remained an outsider because of my refusal to surrender my independence."[1]

Enrique (Henry) Barbosa González was born on May 3, 1916, in San Antonio, Texas, to Leonides González Cigarroa and Genevieve Barbosa Prince de González. His father's ancestors immigrated to Mexico from the Basque region of Spain and settled in the state of Durango, in northern Mexico, where many of them worked as silver miners; his mother was of mixed Scottish and Hispanic ancestry.[2] In 1911 Gonzaléz's parents fled Durango during the Mexican revolution, leaving behind their upper-middle-class life in Mapimi, where Leonides was mayor. Establishing a secure economic footing in the United States was difficult for the González family, which grew to include Henry and his five siblings. Leonides served as editor of San Antonio's *La prensa* newspaper, and the family home became a salon for expatriate Mexican intellectuals and politicians. Encouraged by his parents, Henry immersed himself in literary classics and in key Western political tracts. Henry attended the local public schools, learning English and working part-time during elementary school to help support his family. He graduated from Jefferson High School in 1935 and attended San Antonio College, where he earned an associate's degree in 1937. For two years he attended the University of Texas in Austin, studying engineering and law, but he put his educational plans on hold during the Great Depression because he could not find enough work to pay his tuition.[3] In 1943 González graduated with a bachelor of laws degree (LL.B.) from the St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio, which granted him an honorary J.D. degree in 1965.[4] During World War II, he served as a navy and an army intelligence censor for radio broadcasts and cable traffic. From 1943 to 1946, González was assistant chief probation officer for Bexar County's juvenile court. He resigned from his post as chief probation officer when a local judge forbade him to hire an African American for his staff. Later Gonzaléz worked for the San Antonio Housing Authority, eventually managing a housing project on the western edge of the city.[5] He married the former Bertha Cuellar in 1940 and they raised eight children: Henry B., Jr.; Rose Mary; Charles; Bertha; Stephen; Genevieve; Francis; and Anna Marie.

González's work in probation and public housing gave him entrée to thousands of homes in the city and hence wide name recognition, which helped him to found the Pan American Progressive Association (PAPA) in 1947. Organizing businessmen to contribute to the larger community "responded to my belief that we in the Hispanic community needed to quit complaining about how bad things were and instead do something to help ourselves," he recalled years later.[6]

González later resigned from PAPA, but fighting segregation remained a major component of his early





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activism in local and state politics. Running on a platform to better serve the "neglected people" around San Antonio, González lost election to the Texas state house in 1950, but gained a reputation as a grass-roots organizer and a solid populist whose platform emphasized "manpower versus money power."[7] Three years later he secured a seat on the San Antonio city council as a member of an anti-administration group dubbed the San Antonians that swept to victory largely because of González's campaigning; one newspaper described González as "a young man with a razor-sharp wit and a wide smile." He was a driving force steering legislation that ended segregation in the city's parks and recreation facilities, a victory he called "particularly sweet" since, as a child, he was once forced to leave a city swimming pool because he was Hispanic.[8]

In 1956 González shocked the Lone Star State by winning election to the Texas senate. The *San Antonio News* called González's win a "staggering upset against long odds" considering President Dwight Eisenhower's comfortable victory in González's district. González ran an energetic campaign as "a man—not a name" and avoided ethnic appeals, helping him to win the confidence of his overwhelmingly Anglo constituency. González became the first Mexican American elected to the Texas senate and the first Mexican-American senator in more than a century.[9] His victory was a potent symbol of the opportunities in state and national politics that would become available to Hispanic Americans over the next decade.

Nevertheless, González's time in Austin was often combative and frustratingly hostile. Colleagues referred to him as "that Mexican," and he found himself fighting regular attempts by the legislature to circumvent national civil rights legislation. Twice González filibustered measures that would have resegregated Texas' public schools. He spoke roughly 40 hours in all against bills he called hateful, intending, he said, "to fight every one of them to the last ditch."[10] "It may be some can chloroform their conscience," González said. "But if we fear long enough, we hate, and if we hate long enough, we fight."[11]

Seeking to effect lasting change, González set his sights on higher office. He waged an unsuccessful gubernatorial campaign in 1958, driving across the state in the family station wagon before being outspent five to one by the incumbent. Three years later, he lost the special election for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Lyndon B. Johnson when he became Vice President.[12]

González polled well in urban areas and across South Texas in both his losses, and when Paul Kilday, a 12-term Democratic incumbent who represented the greater San Antonio area, resigned to accept a nomination to the Court of Military Appeals, González entered the special election primed to fill the vacancy. "Barefooted. I ran what I call 'barefooted,'" he said years later. "I didn't have any financial backing. I even had to borrow the money to pay the filing fee in my first race."[13] His principal opponent was John Goode, Jr., a former GOP chairman for Bexar County and a self-described "militant conservative" who frequently railed against the John F. Kennedy administration's New Frontier programs. González, who had taken to calling himself a "consiberal" (liberal on human rights, conservative on property rights and taxes), attacked Goode as an isolationist who "exudes the attitude of defeatism and cynicism."[14] Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower campaigned on Goode's behalf. Kennedy endorsed González, and Vice President Johnson, along with Mexican film star and comedian Cantinflas, came to San Antonio to stump on González's behalf in a campaign that became a referendum on Kennedy's first year in office and a GOP attempt to crack Texas' solidly Democratic House delegation. Days before the election, Johnson said to a crowd, "The eyes of the whole world are on us. They want to see whether we're bigots, whether we're going to be prejudiced or whether we'll all go out and vote for a good American."[15] In an extremely heavy special election turnout, González defeated Goode by a 55 to 44 percent margin on November 4, 1961, becoming the first Hispanic American to represent Texas in the U.S. Congress.[16] In a state where segregation laws undermined the voting rights of thousands of black, Hispanic, and poor voters, this was a remarkable feat. González called the results "a reaffirmation of faith in the Democratic leadership of President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson."[17]

When González entered the House in 1961, his district, the Texas 20th, encompassed Bexar County and the city of San Antonio. Over time, redistricting transferred portions of the county to adjacent districts including the majority-Anglo residential neighborhoods to the north and the poor Mexican-American communities to the south, but the 20th District retained its San Antonio core over the decades. In the 1960s Hispanic Americans constituted a narrow majority of the district, but by the 1990s they made up nearly 70 percent of its population.[18] In his 18 re-election efforts, González often ran unopposed in the primary and was never seriously challenged in the general election.[19]

When he arrived in the House, González sought his predecessor's seat on the influential Armed Services Committee to allow him to meet the needs of the numerous military installations and military personnel in his district. González asked Vice President Johnson to help him attain the seat on Armed Services, but Speaker John McCormack of Massachusetts withheld it to avoid provoking more-senior Members seeking the assignment. González was appointed to the Committee on Banking and Currency, which remained his principal committee assignment although its name changed several times during his long career.

Longtime Banking Committee Chairman Wright Patman of Texas took González under his wing and mentored him. González benefited from the connection to the state delegation since Texans controlled key leadership and committee posts at the time, and Patman was someone González could identify with; he was "commonly labeled a populist, and he was very much a representative of the people," González recalled.[20] Patman counseled González: "Henry, you just stay on this committee and quit making a wave about Armed Services, and you'll end up as chairman."[21] As a junior member, González actively supported key New Frontier and Great Society legislation including the Housing Act of 1964, the Equal Opportunities Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Library Service Act of 1964. Chairman Patman appointed González to be a special liaison for Latin American affairs, and González waged a public campaign against the Bracero Program. Instituted during the Second World War to offset workers lost to military duty, the program permitted U.S. farmers and agricultural businesses to use Mexican laborers to harvest crops, but González denounced its employers because the *braceros* received low wages, poor health care benefits, and substandard housing.[22]

Like many of his generation who fought against segregation, González believed the best way to effect change was to work within the system: to achieve positions of power so that he could advance the civil liberties of all his constituents. "I have never palmed myself off as some sort of ethnic leader," he said, and while other Hispanic Members of Congress supported efforts to organize "Brown Power" movements and believed they spoke on behalf of Hispanics nationwide, González did not.[23] "What I fear is creation of an isolated position, for a minority must develop a means to enlist majority support," he said at the height of the Chicano movement. "Our task is to overcome political isolation, and it is a delicate path that makes the difference between attracting a friend and becoming isolated and alone. If we cry in an empty room, we may expect to hear only our own echoes."[24] González's approach informed his position on representation in the House. He helped found the Congressional Hispanic Caucus in 1976 but eventually became disenchanted with it, ostensibly because he disapproved of its fundraising with lobbyists and its dues structure, though he also believed the group's focus had become too narrow. "Isolating oneself in the tribe means strangulation," he told a reporter.[25] González never served as the group's chairman, and eventually he quit the caucus.[26]

González left his legislative mark as a member of the Banking and Currency Committee, where he rose steadily through the ranks. During the 92nd Congress (1971–1973) he was elevated to the chairmanship of the Subcommittee on International Finance (later the Subcommittee on International Development, Institutions, and Finance), where he remained through the 96th Congress (1979–1981).[27] In the 97th Congress (1981–1983), González took over the gavel of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development; he relinquished that post when the Republicans took control of the House after the 1994 elections. During his tenure as chairman of the International

Finance panel, González routinely attached a rider known as the "González Amendment" to international banking bills. The purpose of the amendment was to protect U.S. citizens from expropriation by countries that received loans from international development institutions to which the United States contributed. González's successful amendment to a foreign aid bill in 1972 required U.S. representatives to international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, to vote against loans for countries that seized property without compensating the U.S. citizens and businesses that were affected.[28]

González became chairman of the Banking and Currency Committee in 1989 at the start of the 101st Congress. His gruff style sometimes rankled Democrats as well as Republicans.[29] However, as one political almanac wrote, the "open and gentlemanly way" González led the panel contrasted with the turbulent tenure of the previous chairman, Fernand J. St. Germain, endearing the Texas Representative to many committee members.[30] Under González's leadership, the Banking Committee handled a raft of legislative initiatives, including flood insurance reform, affordable-housing initiatives, credit for small businesses, and stronger laws to prevent financial crimes like money laundering and bank fraud.

The largest issue to come before the panel was the Savings and Loan Crisis of the late 1980s—the United States' most grievous economic crisis since the Great Depression and its costliest financial scandal to that point in U.S. history. Intended to promote homeownership after World War II, years of deregulation had left the savings and loan industry with little oversight. Banks invested in junk bonds and took risks in the real estate market, plunging many financial institutions and their depositors into insolvency. González had warned about the collapse of the banking industry since the early 1980s, and he faulted Congress for having "all but completely abdicated" its responsibility to oversee domestic and foreign investments.[31] After the crash, González helped direct the massive savings and loan bailout in the spring of 1989, keeping committee hearings open to the public for nearly two years. The *Almanac of American Politics* called González's work on the bill a "first-class job," in no small part because González was "utterly independent" of banking lobbyists.[32]

Sponsored by González, the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act (H.R. 1278, P.L. 101-73) provided a $50 billion federal outlay to close or sell off hundreds of the failed savings and loan associations. It also created the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC)—a budgetary agency with a five-year lifespan—to replace the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation and hiked thrifts' capital requirements, forcing investors to contribute more of their own money and discouraging the risky speculation that caused the crisis. In addition to his general leadership on the bill, González authored two amendments; the first gave state and local public housing agencies a three-month right of first refusal to acquire residences being held by the Resolution Funding Corporation (RFC), and the second expanded the RTC's oversight to include public officials and private real estate brokers. The full House Banking and Currency Committee approved the amended bill by a vote of 49 to 2 on May 2. The bill then passed the House 320 to 97 on June 15. González assigned all 51 members of his committee to conference with the Senate to negotiate a final version of the legislation. While many House Democrats found the solution to fund the bailout unpalatable, the conference report passed the House on August 5 by a vote of 201 to 175 and was signed by President George H. W. Bush.[33]

Another centerpiece of González's tenure as chairman was the push to overhaul the public housing system for the first time since the mid-1970s. The Cranston–González National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 (S. 566, P.L. 101-625) started as a González-sponsored measure in the House (H.R. 1180) after the Ronald Reagan administration cut funding to popular housing programs, but was modified substantially as the House and Senate reconciled their differences. Chaired by González, the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development considered 147 amendments during the markup, eventually approving the bill by voice vote before sending it to the full committee and then to the House Floor. The full House approved the bill in a 378 to 43 vote on August 1, 1991.[34]

Later that fall, Chairman González successfully shepherded through Congress a provision that created the National Housing Trust, lowering mortgage rates for first-time homebuyers and providing funding for down payments. As signed into law, the measure authorized nearly $57 billion in federal spending for a variety of programs, including rent subsidies, public housing, and financial aid for the elderly and disabled, with the aim of increasing the housing stock by more than 350,000 units. For the first time, the federal government issued block grants to meet the housing needs of state and local agencies; this provision was backed by Republicans who were hoping to limit direct spending on housing projects. Again, the committee consideration process was open and often chaotic, and when House and Senate conferees met to reconcile their versions of the measures, González resisted efforts to end public housing construction, eventually getting Home Ownership Made Easy (HOME) grants, portions of which had to be spent directly on the construction of affordable housing. "I have seen what public housing can do," González said, recalling his years in San Antonio. "I would hope we'd not [kill] this—not just out of respect for me—but out of responsiveness to the poor."[35] The conference report passed the House on October 25 by voice vote, and the measure was signed into law by President Bush on November 28, 1991.

González capped off the hectic 1991 session by fighting the Bush administration and most of the House Banking Committee over the best way to overhaul the federal deposit insurance system. The general fund that underwrote the investments of millions of Americans in member banks was "broke," González pointed out, and needed to be replenished if the New Deal era system was to survive. While others advocated a takeover by private industry, González called on Congress to front the capital required by the general fund. On November 21 the House passed an omnibus bill that ultimately cleared the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), which governs America's banking industry, with a $30 billion line of credit at the U.S. Treasury. The bill also strengthened regulations controlling the nation's insurance system and gave federal regulators more tools. Finally, the bill contained a provision backed by González that created an FDIC program giving low-income persons and state and local agencies the ability to acquire single- and multifamily housing units being disposed of by banks.[36]

González also used his chairmanship to make the Federal Reserve System (the Fed) more accountable. Time and again, González reminded his colleagues that the Fed "was not struck from the brow of Jove, the Greek God. It is an institution that is the creature of Congress."[37] As such, González argued, the Fed could and should be called to account by Congress, though historically Congress had been reluctant to do so. The Fed constituted the primary "example of the abuse of openness in the federal government," González once wrote.[38] Largely through dint of congressional hearings, González revealed that the Fed had kept minutes of its meetings for years while denying the existence of official transcripts, destroyed many of its unedited meeting records, falsified records regarding a fleet of more than 50 expensive airplanes it maintained, and authorized billions of dollars in loans to foreign countries without congressional approval. González also condemned the system as elitist because its senior staff included few minorities. In the early 1980s, González tried without success to initiate impeachment proceedings against Fed chairman Paul Volcker. González's accomplishments included the requirement that the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) make the minutes of its meetings public in a timely fashion.[39]

González's insistence on greater transparency in executive branch agencies was rooted in his belief that by gradually relinquishing its coequal constitutional powers over fundamental issues like war powers and the budget, Congress had created a permissive environment in which a long line of Presidents had chosen "to usurp leadership, authority, and power." In 1992, González wrote of a "tremendous disequilibrium" between the executive and legislative branches of government. "Congress today has been relegated to a position of nay-saying, that is, of trying to restrict an agenda set by the President, rather than to

set an agenda of its own," he wrote. "This role of objector rather than initiator is a weak one."[40]

González's efforts to demystify the Federal Reserve System followed a pattern of legislative initiatives on which his position isolated him from most of his colleagues. The creation of a special committee to investigate the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas in 1963 highlighted González's tenacity on a controversial issue. González had been seated in the fifth car in Kennedy's motorcade.[41] Like many Americans, he came to doubt the conclusions of the Warren Commission, created to investigate the circumstances around Kennedy's death. "I suppose I really had questions from the start as to why he died, who killed him, and what direction had the bullets come from," González wrote years later in a book that alleged the assassination was a conspiracy to overthrow the U.S government. After testimony at the Watergate hearings indicating that Kennedy may have been killed in retaliation for the botched Bay of Pigs incident early in his presidency, González introduced a resolution to create a special House committee to investigate Kennedy's assassination and the 1968 assassination of civil rights leader Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. "We need to know why [the assassinations] happened, what the net effect of these events have had on us, and how to prevent their happening again," he noted.[42]

González became chairman of the House Select Assassinations Committee on February 2, 1977, but while the committee was still organizing, he ran into perhaps the most damaging experience of his House career. González became involved in an acrimonious public dispute with the committee's chief counsel, Richard A. Sprague, and after his efforts to remove Sprague from the committee met with tepid backing from House leadership and the unanimous disapproval of his fellow committee members, González resigned less than a month after becoming chairman, on March 2, 1977.[43]

In the decades that followed, González was often the lone voice for a long list of causes. He repeatedly urged a full investigation into the murder of Judge John W. Wood in San Antonio, arguing that the killing had been a conspiracy by organized crime. In 1982 when indictments were handed down against five individuals, FBI director William Webster thanked González for providing the impetus for the investigation.[44] Twice González recommended the impeachment of President Ronald Reagan: for his initiation of the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983 and for his alleged role in the Iran-Contra affair. González's committee also uncovered $3 billion in U.S. loans that were made to Iraq through an Italian bank based in Atlanta, Georgia. The loans were ostensibly intended as agricultural credits, but it was later revealed that they were converted for Saddam Hussein's military purposes. This episode and President George H. W. Bush's failure to obtain a formal declaration of war from Congress before the first Gulf War early in 1991 prompted a later effort by González to impeach President Bush.[45]

"It was fitting that González represented the area of arid Texas scrubland where the legendary Alamo stands," writes Robert Cwiklik, who authored a book about the powerful bank lobby in Congress. "Over the years, he'd often been the last man at the fort, fighting the hopeless battles.… But populists like González didn't find Washington, land of the done deal, a very welcoming place. He'd long been dismissed by insiders, who no more liked his polyester suits of yellow and green than his principled, sourly uncompromising stands."[46] González cared little what people said about him, and he relished his reputation as "the Don Quixote of the House," once proudly telling a reporter about his "great big satchel at home just crammed full of lost causes."[47] At the conclusion of legislative business on many days, González frequently delivered lengthy special orders speeches which he titled, "my advice to the privileged orders." Shunning D.C. society, González rented a small apartment and refused to move his family to the capital; thus, most weekends he returned to San Antonio. González's lifestyle was largely due to his intent to remain independent from special-interest groups and others seeking to curry his favor. "I still haven't gotten the tips of my shoes dirty," González noted, long after he became a force in the House.[48] "The people elected me with no conditions attached," he remarked late in his career. "No debt to pay to anybody. Not beholden to a particular group. I was free to be guided by my own conscience."[49]

In September 1997 Representative González, who was 81 and in failing health, announced his retirement from the House. "I am proud of a long list of achievements and hard-won battles for a better community and a better country," he said. "Now, with a full and grateful heart, I must declare that it is time for me to come home."[50] At the start of the 106th Congress (1999–2001), González's son Charles succeeded him; they were the first Hispanic father-son pair of Representatives.[51] Jim Leach of Iowa, who succeeded González as chairman of the Banking and Currency Committee when the Republicans gained control of the chamber in 1995, memorialized González's service in a tribute on the House Floor: "An old-fashioned liberal, Henry never had a conflict of interest. He did not simply advocate, he lived campaign reform. His only special interest was his constituents. He never let them down, nor did they ever countenance an alternative."[52] González died in San Antonio on November 28, 2000, and was interred there at San Fernando Cemetery II.[53]

## FOR FURTHER READING


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## MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

**University of Texas, The Center for American History** (Austin). *Papers*: 1946–1998, approximately 500 cubic feet. The Henry B. González Papers comprise correspondence, committee records, campaign files, schedules, personal schedules, appointments, legislative files, photographs, video and audiotapes, memorabilia, and artifacts. Included are records documenting González's service as an elected member of the San Antonio city council, the Texas state senate, and the U.S. Congress. The bulk of the records document González's tenure as a U.S. Representative from Texas (1961–1998). A finding aid is available in the repository and online.

## NOTES

1 Henry González, "From Participation to Equality," in Philip L. Fetzer, ed., *The Ethnic Moment: The Search for Equality in the American Experience* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996): 172.

2 Gonzalez, Henry B.," *Current Biography Year Book, 1993* (New York: H. W. Wilson and Company, 1993): 214.

3 "González, Henry B.," *American National Biography Online*.

4 "Henry Barbosa González," in *Notable Latino Americans: A Biographical Dictionary*, Matt S. Meier, ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997): 183–184.

5 Eugene Rodriguez, Jr., *Henry B. Gonzalez: A Political Profile* (New York: Arno Press, 1976): 57–58.

6 González, "From Participation to Equality": 156, 158.

7 Rodriguez, *Henry B. Gonzalez*: 50–57; quotation on p. 55.

8 González, "From Participation to Equality": 162; see also Juan Gómez-Quiñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940–1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990): 58; Rodriguez, *Henry B. Gonzalez*: 60–72.

9 Antonio Navvaro, a native Texan of Spanish descent, was appointed a state senator in 1846. See Rodriguez, *Henry B. Gonzalez*: 77.

10 "Integrationists in Texas Lose Fight; to Try Again," 4 May 1957, *Washington Post*: A10; "Bias Delays Pledged: Two Texas Senators Plan New Segregation Filibusters," 4 May 1957, *New York Times*: 43.

11 "Texas: For Whom the Bells Toll," 13 May 1957, *Time*: 27.

12 "Texas Race Poses Integration Test," 11 May 1958, *New York Times*: 52; Rodriguez, *Henry B. Gonzalez*: 86–87.

13 Michelle Garcia, "Henry B. Gonzalez's Last Stand," 8 November 1998, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*: E1.

14 Dave Harmon, "His Crusades Over, Henry B. Returns Home; San Antonio Democrat Leaves," 3 January 1999, *Austin American-Statesman*: A1.

15 "Texas G.O.P. Predicts Victory in Special Race for House Seat," 3 June 1961, *New York Times*: 8; "All-Out House Race Nearing Close in Texas," 29 October 1961, *Chicago Tribune*: 9; "The Ex-President," 4 November 1961, *Christian Science Monitor*: 9; "A Bias-Free Vote Asked by Johnson," 4 November 1961, *New York Times*: 10; "Gonzalez, Democrat, Is Winner in Texas Race for House Seat," 5 November 1961, *New York Times*: 1; "Victory Conceded by Goode: 'New Frontiersman' Gonzalez Wins Congress Seat in Texas Election," 5 November 1961, *Washington Post*: A1.

16 For election results, see Michael J. Dubin et al., *United States Congressional Elections, 1788–1997* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1998): 629. The *New York Times* claimed that the turnout set a record for Texas special elections; see "Democrats Cheer Victory in Texas," 6 November 1961, *New York Times*: 42.

17 "Texas Winner Claims an O.K. for Kennedy," 6 November 1961, *Chicago Tribune*: 3.

18 "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," http://history.house.gov/institution/election-statistics/election-statistics; and various editions of the *Congressional Directory* and the *Almanac of American Politics* (1972 to present).

19 "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," http://history.house.gov/Institution/Election-Statistics/Election-Statistics/.

20 González, "From Participation to Equality": 165.

21 Julie Leininger Pycior, "Henry B. Gonzalez," in *Profiles in Power: Twentieth-Century Texans in Washington* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004, Rev. ed.): 302.

22 For a useful overview of the Bracero Program, see Gilbert Paul Carrasco, "Bracero Program," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, Suzanne Oboler and Deena J. González, eds., vol. 1 (New York: Oxford: 2005): 220–224. The following regional studies of the Bracero Program are also useful: Erasmo Gamboa, *Mexican Labor and World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest, 1942–1947* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Ernesto Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-Business in California, 1947–1960* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977).

23 *Politics in America, 1990* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1989): 1488.

24 For the quotation, see Thomas J. Foley, "'Brown Power' Parley Opens This Weekend,'" 22 October 1971, *Los Angeles Times*: A18. See also Jack Rosenthal, "U.S. Latins Vote Political Drive: Office in Capital Planned by Spanish-Speaking Unit," 25 October 1971, *New York Times*: 17.

25 Paul Houston, "Rep. Gonzalez: He Packs a Punch When It Gets Tense," 15 July 1990, *Los Angeles Times*: A1.

26 The date of González's departure from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus is unclear, though it was likely between 1986 and 1987.

27 The name of the Banking and Currency Committee eventually was changed to Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs; the name of González's subcommittee was changed to International Development, Institutions, and Finance in the 94th Congress.

28 See, for instance, David R. Francis, "Nixon Acts to Stifle Congress: Tough Stand on Expropriation," 22 January 1972, *Christian Science Monitor*: 8.

29 Robert M. Garsson, "Will Gonzalez Punish His Challengers, or Cultivate Them?" 10 December 1990, *The American Banker*. González had a frosty relationship with House leaders, including Speaker Thomas Foley of Washington. Some complained privately that González ignored subcommittee chairmen and operated "in a vacuum." Just before the start of the 102nd Congress, González's opponents sought to remove him from the chairmanship of the Banking and Currency Committee, but González survived a vote in the Democratic Caucus, 163 to 89.

30 *Politics in America, 1990* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1989): 1485.

31 *Congressional Record*, House, 98th Cong., 1st sess. (25 April 1983): 9610.

32 *Almanac of American Politics, 1992* (Washington, D.C.: National Journal Inc., 1991): 1225. For González's independence on the bill to bail out savings and loan associations, see Paul Duke, Jr., "House Banking Panel Chief Gonzalez, Despite Doubts of Critics, Helps Keep Thrift Bill Tough," 19 July 1989, *Wall Street Journal*: A16. This was a point of pride for González who, as early as 1954, was known to have rejected a gift of $14,000 in bank stock from a San Antonio lobbyist. See Vincent J. Burke, "Offered $14,000 Bank Stock, Lawmaker Says," 4 August 1964, *Los Angeles Times*: 4; *Congressional Record*, House, 101st Cong., 1st sess. (4 April 1989): 5365.

33 "Sweeping Thrift Bailout Bill Cleared," *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 101st Cong., 1st sess., 1989, vol. XLV (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1989): 117–133.

34 For a comprehensive summary of the measure and House action on the measure, see "U.S. Housing Programs Overhauled: Bill Aimed to Increase Stock of Affordable Homes," *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, *1990* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1990): 631–647.

35 "U.S. Housing Programs Overhauled": 643.

36 *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, *1991* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1991): 76–78.

37 *Congressional Record*, House 98th Cong., 2nd sess. (4 June 1984): 14821.

38 González, "From Participation to Equality": 168.

39 For more on González's efforts to introduce transparency at the Federal Reserve Bank, which routinely led to conflict with powerful Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan, see Robert D. Auerbach, *Deception and Abuse at the Fed: Henry B. Gonzalez Battles Alan Greenspan's Bank* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).

40 Henry B. Gonzalez, "The Relinquishment of Co-Equality by Congress," *Harvard Journal on Legislation* 29 (Summer 1992): 331–356; quotations on pp. 331, 355–356.

41 Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (New York: Fawcett Premier, 1965): 932–935, quotation on p. 935. González had been Kennedy's ally from the

early days of his presidential campaign and had known Kennedy as a young U.S. Representative. Along with Senator Dennis Chavez of New Mexico, González was a national co-chairman of the "Viva Kennedy" Clubs, aimed at bringing out the Mexican-American vote for the Democratic presidential nominee. On November 21, 1963, González hosted Kennedy in San Antonio, whose residents welcomed the President warmly. González accompanied Kennedy on the rest of the trip, through Houston and on to Dallas, joking as they disembarked from Air Force One, "Well, I'm taking my risks. I haven't got my steel vest yet."

42 Michael Canfield and Alan J. Weberman, *Coup d'Etat in America: The CIA and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (New York: The Third Press/Joseph Okpaku Publishing Company, Inc., 1975): xvii–xviii.

43 Among his complaints, González cited the committee and staff as "an administrative nightmare" and characterized Sprague, a former Philadelphia prosecutor, as "insubordinate, and insulting, not to mention disloyal." David Burnham, "Gonzalez, Assailing His Committee, Quits as Assassination Inquiry Head," 3 March 1977, *New York Times*: 1; George Lardner, Jr., "Gonzalez Submits Resignation from JFK-King Panel," 3 March 1977, *Washington Post*: A1; T. R. Reid, "Rep. Gonzalez, Sprague Told to Work Together," 26 February 1977, *Washington Post*: A2; George Lardner, Jr., "Rep. Gonzalez Trying to Fire Sprague," 11 February 1977, *Washington Post*: A1; David Burnham, "Sprague Ouster Is Upset by Panel on Assassination," 11 February 1977, *Washington Post*: A1. González also claimed that interference by organized crime had undermined the investigation. Some speculated that the House would dissolve the panel with González's departure, but its leadership was transferred to Representative Louis Stokes of Ohio. Eventually, the panel, whose activities were covered widely in the media, filed a report that Kennedy was likely killed as part of a conspiracy. For more on the committee and its work, see Sylvia Meagher, *Master Index to the JFK Assassination Investigations: The Reports and Supporting Volumes of the House Select Committee on Assassinations and the Warren Commission* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1980). González's dispute with Sprague damaged his reputation among his House colleagues. For an analysis of González's ostracism by the establishment, see Christopher Hitchens, "No Fool on the Hill," *Harper's Magazine* 285 (October 1992): 84–96.

44 *Current Biography, 1993*: 216.

45 Some of González's actions did not endear him to his colleagues. After steering the savings and loan bailout to a successful conclusion in the summer of 1989, González pursued an investigation of Charles Keating and the Keating Five, a group of Senators (four of them Democrats) who came under intense scrutiny for their connections to the head of the failed Lincoln Savings and Loan Bank, which cost U.S. taxpayers roughly $3 billion.

46 Robert Cwiklik, *House Rules: A Freshman Congressman's Initiation to the Backslapping, Backpedaling, and Backstabbing Ways of Washington* (New York: Villiard Books, 1991): 121–122.

47 Harmon, "His Crusades Over, Henry B. Returns Home; San Antonio Democrat Leaves." Some of González's critics were far less charitable. Late in González's career, *Politics in America* observed that he was "all but dismissed in the House as a flake"; see *Politics in America, 1990*: 1485. "His dedication to principle has sometimes reduced his effectiveness," observed a biographer; see Meier, "Henry Barbosa González," 183; Bicknell Eubanks, "Gonzalez: A Sturdy Liberal," 10 November 1961, *Christian Science Monitor*: 16.

48 Christopher Marquis, "Henry Gonzalez, 84; Served 37 Years in House," 20 November 2000, *New York Times*: A33. González also had a reputation for being gruff and pugnacious. In October 1963, González was one of fewer than two dozen House lawmakers who voted to abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee. Republican Representative Ed Foreman of Texas was quoted in several papers as having called the San Antonio Congressman a communist in response to González's vote. González confronted Foreman on the House Floor, and a physical altercation ensued. See "Capitol Hill Rematch Is Off," 30 October 1963, *Washington Evening Star*; and Jerry Doolittle, "'One-Punch' Gonzalez Doesn't Faze Foreman," 30 October 1963, *Washington Post*: A1. In 1986, González allegedly assaulted a constituent at a San Antonio diner after he overheard the man call him a communist. The district attorney, whom González later called a coward, charged González with misdemeanor assault, but the charges were eventually dropped. Pycior, "Henry B. Gonzalez": 303; Rodriguez, *Henry B. Gonzalez*: 125–127; Renee Haines, "Congressman Charged with Assaulting Constituent," 5 May 1987, United Press International.

49 Garcia, "Henry B. Gonzalez's Last Stand."

50 "Longtime Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez Plans Retirement," 4 September 1997, Associated Press; Catalina Camia, "Gonzalez Departure Will Be End of Era; Texas Iconoclast Championed Host of Causes for Democrats," 5 September 1997, *Dallas Morning News*: 1A.

51 Edward Roybal and Lucille Roybal-Allard became the first father-daughter pair of U.S. Representatives when Roybal-Allard succeeded her father in his Los Angeles-area district at the start of the 103rd Congress (1993–1995). Félix Córdova Dávila (1917–1932) and Jorge Luis Córdova-Díaz (1968–1973), a father-son team of Puerto Rican Resident Commissioners, were the first Hispanic parent-child combination in Congress.

52 *Congressional Record*, House, 105th Cong., 1st sess. (7 October 1997): 21519. For the rest of the tributes, see pp. 21517–21525.

53 For an obituary, see Christopher Marquis, "Henry Gonzalez, 84; Served 37 Years in House," 29 November 2000, *New York Times*: A33.